Hilliff Y-5 (ca. 1901) 1954 NT14 Plateau Yumans NT14
Havasupai

578 691 We are going to put a stop to this destruction of food, and I am going to learn the reason back of it."

"He say. She hear."

"I'll have E-e brought up too," I told him. "We'll find out why she got into this feud."

Billy turned and walked slowly home, carrying the wilted corn in his hand.

800 I was so eager to get at the trial and learn why these complacent, childish women were determinedly destroying one another's food, that I forgot this was a school day until the bushes parted. The little folks came through at a comfortable walk and entered the classroom. Vesnor had learned to restrain his impatience, but experience had convinced me by now that if he and his pony were absent, the children would spend the day playing in the creek.

578 691 695 Vesnor, Little Jim, Billy, Prince and the three women were waiting at my office when school was dismissed. I unlocked the door, and they filed in, the women abashed by the formality and frightened by Vesnor's disapproving mien. They had been accustomed to indulging their love of trickery until the time came for physical combat; the victory then went to the one who could scratch and pull hair faster than her antagonist. A hearing in the superintendent's office was something new and quite disturbing.

Since Little Jim was one of the plaintiffs, he was the first to testify. He stated his case briefly: "I go work corn. Little light. Sun no come up. I see Billy squaw, Prince squaw in corn. Make walk on stalk, break down. I see run in bushes. Run to camp." Little Jim sat down, his troubled face creased by an angry frown.

203 At that moment a woman, her *sutam* floating behind her, breezed through the door and eased her plump body into a chair. She was Vesnor's wife, a giggling woman, much younger than he, whose ears were attuned to gossip. She had come to gather news, first hand, so that she might gleefully dispense it later to an eager audience. This feud had been going on for some time, possibly years, and interest was keen, for word of the trial had swept through the village.

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CHAPTER TWENTY

The Peach Dance

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As summer waned, the Indians' activities centered on the Peach Dance, their annual harvest festival, held in late August or early September to give thanks to Those Above for a bountiful crop and to petition for continued protection and care. 796 527 574

Men and boys hurried to complete a task at which they had worked indifferently for weeks—the clearing of brush and debris from the dance floor. Messengers rode up the trails to the east and to the west, carrying the knotted counting cord extending invitations to friendly tribes. The invited guests need only cut a knot from the cord each day, the last knot representing the day festivities would begin. These guests would bring news, and their presence would add zest and gayety to the celebration. Women left their games of chance and busied themselves at the grinding stones. Vegetables were brought in from the gardens; peaches, figs and apricots, either fresh or dried, were prepared for the big feast. [203 211] [262]

The Peach Dance was one of those age-old ceremonies revealing the true culture of the Havasupai. For centuries men and women of friendly tribes had flocked to the canyon to take part in the festivities and to trade Navaho blankets, ponies, saddles and silver ornaments for garden-grown vegetables, fruits and buckskin. [439]

A few Walapai and several Hopi drifted in for the dance, and our hopes kindled that some of the white men and women who had previously attended this ceremony might make the trip into

Ceremonies and Other Public Activities

Funerals

764 562 [152] Women formerly took no part in crematory rites other than wailing as mourners and, perhaps, dressing the corpse. Mourners were not hired; such wailing was an expression of genuine sorrow, as it is today.

[177] [535] In the all night funeral ceremony held today, women are active with men as singers and dancers, although leadership rests with the men. In the dance, borrowed from the Paiute, a line of women faces the men's line, and the two lines dance backward and forward about 10 paces throughout the night with pauses only between the dance songs. Women may also sing with the two other groups of singers who perform simultaneously with the dancers, but ordinarily they do not. One woman who sometimes does so is the Walapai wife of a Havasupai shaman. It is said that she is asked to sing because she knows all the songs.

Announcements of Divorce

586 203 [562] In earlier days, it was customary for husband and wife in a divorce to state their respective cases publicly. Apparently, this procedure served as a public announcement of status change for the divorcing parties. At the same time, and probably this is the immediate reason for the custom, it afforded both husband and wife an opportunity to state or answer charges in an attempt to win popular sympathy or support. In this matter, a woman had an equal right with a man to present her case.

Gambling

525 [657] Public gambling was a daily diversion on the Havasupai reservation until recently. Each afternoon in good weather, men and women gathered in an uncultivated plot of land beside the main trail in Supai which was popularly referred to as "the gambling place." Officially, Indian Service personnel frowned upon this custom, and there were attempts to stop it altogether. But in the words of one informant: "If we don't gamble, we got no fun down here. We always gamble. Once about 1933-36 agent try to make us stop, but people tell him we got no other fun. It's good for us. We always do like that. People don't quit and pretty soon agent he don't say no more about it. Here it goes around pretty even. Nobody wins or loses all time and if somebody lose too much he don't quit gambling, just come back next day, play some more, and win again maybe. We keep track and every time he wins, it goes on debt till all paid up. Then he's clear again."

Under aboriginal conditions, gambling was not a daily practice, but it was a popular pursuit whenever two or three families were camping together and during the months when many of the families were living in Cataract

Throughout his life he had been well respected, and
during his final illness received the well wishes of many visitors who were deeply grieved at his approaching death. 764 [763] [554] [203]

The following day, in Havasupai village, Alva Jones, a village "crier," made the public announcement in a five minute oration in which he did not mention the deceased by name, referring to him as "that old man who was sick at Grand Canyon." He urged that the funeral be held in Supai and that the body be returned there for burial, but indicated that the relatives would make the decision.

Since the surviving relatives did not wish to suffer the expense of bringing the body to Supai, burial was arranged at the Drift Fence (between Grand Canyon village and Topocoba Hilltop) where the Havasupai have for some years maintained a small cemetery.

Among the people in the canyon several were restless, especially at night, and some reported seeing the ghost of Mexican Jack. It was not felt that this apparition would be harmful, but that in wanting to talk to the living it could be potentially dangerous. [775]

Mexican Jack was buried at the Drift Fence within a day or two with little ceremony.

On the afternoon of August 4th, Arthur Kaska, whose house was just across a fence marking the public land used for recreation, mounted his horse and rode to the recreation area, where rodeo practice was being held. From a position on horseback near the cow chute, he called a lengthy announcement to the effect that the funeral dance would be held that night. He urged everyone to attend and told them that the dance would be held in front of the house of Clark Jack, Mexican Jack's son. 765

By 8:30 p. m. a fire had been built in front of the house, and relatives of the deceased had begun to gather around it. Mark Hanna came and addressed the nonrelatives who were grouped nearby. He requested that someone from the audience act as a speaker to remonstrate with the relatives about weeping over the dead. There was no immediate response.

While Mark was talking, many other people arrived. It appeared that everyone had walked to the ceremony. No horses were to be seen that night or in the morning. (Havasupais, especially men and boys, usually ride everywhere--except to funerals and the annual round dance.) [492]

Soon the wailing by relatives began and people piled gifts of clothing near the mourners. The relatives were standing together in a tight line, [152]